

German Physiks Emperor Preamplifier and Monoblock Power Amplifier

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Famous for its long established omnidirectional loudspeaker brand, German Physiks has launched a range of high-end electronics. Called the Emperor Extreme range, this includes a preamplifier and a monoblock amplifier. This pair is known for its exceptional clarity, low noise and wide frequency response.

Emperor Preamplifier

The Emperor preamplifier was designed by German Physiks to be the ideal partner for their Emperor monoblock. To ensure optimum compatibility, the maker has carefully selected the input impedance, sensitivity and output impedance



The Emperor preamplifier has 3 unbalanced and 3 balanced inputs. This allows the unit to work in a system handling a wide range of sources, such as streamers, CD, vinyl and cassettes. In short, it is very capable and caters well for users with diverse interests. In addition, each channel has 2 balanced and 2 unbalanced outputs, allowing the unit to work in multi-amp systems.



The preamplifier's extremely wide bandwidth, allows it to reproduce the input signal with a high level of fidelity and naturalness. A high voltage power supply ensures that the signal's full dynamic range is preserved. An extremely important feature of this preamplifier is the volume control. The manufacturer has used a sophisticated relay switched resistor network that allows precise adjustment of the output level, as well as maintaining accurate balance between the two channels. This design also provides a constant input and output impedance, which avoids the changes in sound quality with different settings that can occur with simpler designs.



The heart of a preamplifier is the power supply. The Emperor preamplifier's power supply has been specially designed to provide a clean and stable source of power with minimal noise. It is worth noting that the mains power is not directly connected to the amplifier via the power switch. Instead it comes via a high current relay which is controlled via the front panel On button. This helps to reduce interference from the mains.



German Physiks has also provided independent toroidal transformers for the signal and control circuits. These were selected for their low external magnetic field. To provide thorough isolation, each transformer is housed in its own screened enclosure. High quality power supply capacitors are used throughout the unit. Careful attention has been paid to all aspects of the design to minimise background noise.



The amplifier has a ground lift switch which allows noise caused by earth loops to be eliminated. In the event that a ground loop exists, simply pressing the switch safely breaks the loop preventing magnetic fields radiated by nearby equipment from generating noise. The result is a quiet background like a deep ocean floor.



The display brightness may be adjusted to suit the room lighting level via a simple front panel control. Most prominent on the front panel are the large volume and input selector controls, though most people will choose to operate the amplifier using the supplied remote control because of its convenience.

As a mechanical product, the Emperor preamplifier has a strong German spirit: astute, rugged and incredibly accurate. The case is CNC cut and engraved from slabs of solid aluminium creating beautiful straight lines. If there is a design award, this preamplifier would, without doubt, reach the final and take the first prize. It is so beautiful and unique.

Specifications:

- Dynamic range: 140 dB
- Signal to noise ratio: -103 dB A, ref 2V
- THD + Noise: 0.001% @ 2kHz output (22Hz to 22kHz)
- Frequency response: 0.5 Hz - 95 kHz
- Size: 474 x 160 x 474 mm (WxHxD)
- Weight: 30 kg
- Warranty: 5 years
- Country of manufacture: Germany

Emperor Extreme Mono Power Amplifier

The top of the range German Physiks monoblock power amplifier will drive any of their loudspeakers, as well as any high-end loudspeaker currently on the market. The stunning looks of this amplifier are enough to convince people of its exceptional capability. Each giant monoblock is built with a 15 mm thick high-grade aluminium chassis. This provides the essential mechanical strength to support its 80 kg mass, whilst also minimising the effects of vibration and electronic interference.



The high output power of this monoblock allows it to work well with a wide range of loudspeakers, while minimising distortion. Its large heatsinks are cleverly concealed inside the chassis, allowing the amplifier to run continuously and stably at high output powers, whilst also ensuring longevity of its components, as well as providing a very natural sound.

The unit has both balanced and unbalanced inputs. It is worth noting that the amplifier has 3 gain settings. Each setting provides a slightly different tonal balance, allowing the user to better match it to suit their system. On the -9dB setting the amplifier has a warm balance. On the nominal gain setting the balance is neutral. On the +3dB setting the sound is more detailed and revealing.



The Emperor monoblock amplifier is a fully balanced design in order to minimise noise. As with the preamplifier, the heart of this monoblock is the power supply. The manufacturer has paid great attention to enable the power supply to be able to deliver the maximum power to the loudspeakers, whilst providing the low level signal section with a stable noise free source of power. The supplies for the low level signal stage, control stage and power stage use independent toroidal power transformers. These were carefully selected for their low external magnetic fields. To minimise interference from any residual magnetic field, each transformer is housed in its own enclosure.

Like the Emperor preamplifier, to reduce interference from the mains, the mains power is not directly connected to the amplifier via the power switch. Instead it comes via a high current relay, which is controlled by the front panel On button.



When a large power supply is connected to the mains, the initial in-rush current can be high enough to blow fuses or trip circuit breakers. To prevent this, the German Physiks Emperor monoblock has a 4-stage soft start circuit. At switch-on, this limits the in-rush current and when the current has stabilised it is switched out of the circuit. It also helps to reduce stress on the power control relay.



Also like the Emperor preamplifier, in order to reduce noise, the Emperor monoblock amplifier uses decoupling capacitors placed as close as possible to where they are needed in the circuit.



To learn more about "German technology" and "German quality", perhaps some of the following information will be useful to readers. Before the German Physiks ships any product, they must undergo rigorous testing using a state-of-the-art computerised test system. Although all the components were carefully selected at the design stage, and the assembly process is subject to very tight controls, each unit is only finally released after it has passed a final detailed electrical and mechanical inspection.

Technical specifications

- Power: 550W RMS into 8 ohms, 1,100W RMS into 4 ohms, 1,800W RMS into 2 ohms
- Frequency response: 0.5 Hz - 80 kHz (-3dB)
- THD + Noise: 0.008% (1W into 8 ohms)
- Maximum range: 129 dB
- Signal to noise ratio: -91 dB A weighted @ 1W into 8 ohms, Balanced input
- Weight: 80 kg
- Size: 474 x 300 x 474 mm (WxHxD)
- Warranty: 5 years
- Country of manufacture: Germany

Experience

To experience the sound of the Emperor preamplifier and Emperor monoblock amplifier, we used the German Physiks Unlimited loudspeakers, Clear Audio Performance DC turntable and the WAVAC LCR-X2 phono stage fitted with the power supply module, DC power module and amplifier module.



The sound that this system produces is really special: once heard, you will remember it forever. It reminds me of some really good Swiss amplifiers that I have heard in the past, such as FM Acoustics, Nagra and Dartzeeel. Although it is light, smooth and transparent, this German Physiks system has rather different features. Maybe in part due to the effect of the German Physiks Unlimited omnidirectional loudspeakers, the sound stage of this system is very wide and deep. It

lays back behind the loudspeaker position, but it is not lacking in detail. This is a system with a soaring and subtle sound.



With the Emperor monoblock amplifier gain setting set to give a neutral tonal characteristic, the sound had the best balance and quality. When playing with Unlimited loudspeakers, we liked this mode the most. The clear and subtle sounds that are characteristic of the room space create an interesting listening experience. This is indeed very different from the experience when listening to conventional systems. In -9dB gain setting, the amplifier produces a richer and warmer sound. This is most appropriate when listening to small musical ensembles and vocal music. It can easily evoke the listener's emotions. Switching to + 3dB gain setting, the sound is alert, bright, extremely precise and detailed. This setting is most suitable for classical music.



So, with three “sounds” to choose from, the Emperor Extreme is able to drive any system and without doubt appears to be a universal key to enter the musical world. No matter what kind of music the listener chooses, fast or slow, strong or smooth, monochrome or multi-coloured, modern or classical, all are handled harmoniously, providing a most involving listening experience.

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Trường Giang